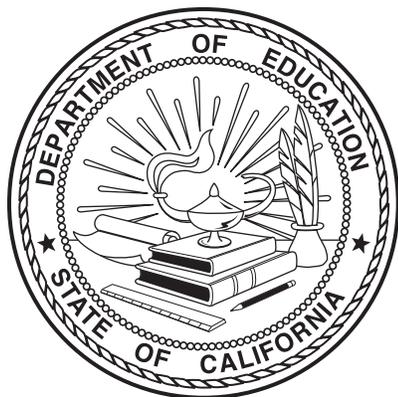

Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program



Understanding 2008 STAR Program Tests

Information for School District and School Staff

- What's New in 2008
- Questions and Answers
- Internet Resources

February 2008

Prepared by the
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Purpose

Educating students requires a team effort that actively involves educators, parents and guardians, and students in the learning process. To effectively carry out this shared responsibility, every member of that team must have a common understanding about the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program and the role it plays in ensuring that all students achieve California content standards for core subject areas.

The purpose of *Understanding 2008 STAR Program Tests: Information for School District and School Staff* is to help local administrators work with their teachers and support staff to make sure they have the basic information they need to:

- Communicate effectively about the STAR Program with parents and guardians and students.
- Report and use results of each STAR Program test to help monitor the academic progress of students and schools.

Assistance materials in this packet are for use by school district and school administrators to prepare teachers and support staff for their roles as key communicators. The packet includes information about key changes in the 2008 STAR Program and answers to commonly asked questions about the STAR Program and each of its tests.

Uses of Information and Materials

All of the assistance materials have been prepared for a variety of uses with various audiences. For example, the “What’s New the 2008 STAR Program” update can be copied by the school district or school test coordinator and shared with principals at a management team meeting. Those principals in turn can share this information at a weekly faculty meeting. Principals can use the assistance materials to update parent leaders who also carry a major role as key communicators. The “Suggested Uses of Information and Materials Chart” on page 5 describes each document included in the packet, language versions, and some suggested uses.

A second assistance packet, *Communicating with Parents and Guardians About 2008 STAR Program Tests: Resources for Use by School District and School Staff*, provides camera-ready copies of a variety of materials for school district and/or school administrators to duplicate for distribution to parents and guardians. These materials include parent/guardian guides and a brochure, newsletter inserts, and sample parent/guardian letters with attachments. Administrators can duplicate the guides and brochure for use in mailings or as handouts at parent/guardian information meetings. Parents and guardians also can be encouraged to view the materials in this packet directly via the Internet.

A list of “Resources Available on the Internet” also is provided at the end of each packet. Both packets are posted on the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>.

Special Focus Areas

Some assistance material in this packet is designed to prepare staff for communicating with the parents and guardians of English learners and students with disabilities. This material with page references is listed in the table of contents.

Suggested Uses of Information and Materials Chart

| Document | Description | Suggested Uses |
|---|--|--|
| <p>What's New in the 2008 STAR Program</p> <p>Available Language: English</p> | <p>Provides a summary of the key changes in the STAR Program for administration in spring 2008</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Share information with staff and distribute copies at staff meetings, in staff mailboxes, and at grade-level and/or department meetings. ■ Provide copies for administrators, teachers, and parent leaders to use in preparing for conferences and other meetings with parents and guardians. ■ Post copies in the main school office and on staff bulletin boards. |
| <p>Questions and Answers</p> <p>Available Language: English</p> | <p>Six question and answer documents provide answers to questions frequently asked by staff, parents, and guardians about the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 2008 STAR Program ■ California Standards Tests ■ California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey ■ California Alternate Performance Assessment ■ California Modified Assessment ■ Designated Primary Language Test | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Share information with staff and distribute copies at staff meetings, in staff mailboxes, and at grade-level and/or department meetings (also share with non-certificated staff members). ■ Provide copies for administrators, teachers, and parent leaders to use in preparing for school district and school advisory group and site council meetings, information nights, conferences, and other meetings with parents and guardians. ■ Post copies in the main school office and on staff bulletin boards. |

Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program

What's New in the 2008 STAR Program

Standardized Testing and Reporting Program Testing to Continue in Grade Two

- New legislation, Senate Bill 80, passed in September 2007, authorized the administration of Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program tests to continue in grade two through 2011 when the STAR Program is scheduled to sunset. The new California Modified Assessment (CMA) is the only STAR Program test not to be administered in 2008 to students in grade two. This is due to the eligibility requirement that students must have at least one set of California Standards Test (CST) or two sets of California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) results to be considered for the CMA.

New Standards-Based California Modified Assessment to be Administered

- The new CMA will be administered for the first time in 2008 to eligible students in grades three through five. This standards-based assessment will be taken by special education students with disabilities that prevent them from achieving grade-level proficiency on the CSTs with or without accommodations.* All students in grades three through five, whose individualized education program (IEP) specifies participation in the CMA, may be assessed in English-language arts and mathematics, and grade five students taking the CMA may also be assessed in science. The CMA blueprints are posted on the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/cmablueprints.asp>. The CMA does allow for test variations and accommodations; however, it does not allow for modifications because the CMA is

* Grade-level proficiency refers to the student's level of knowledge and degree of mastery of the California content standards for the subjects being assessed. This grade-level proficiency should not to be confused with the STAR Program performance levels as reported on the STAR Student Report.

a modified test. CMA eligibility criteria, approved by the State Board of Education, are available on the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/cmastar.asp>. The participation criteria provide assistance to IEP teams in determining who should take the CMA and how it is to be administered.

Revised California Alternate Performance Assessment to be Administered

- The CAPA, revised to be more closely linked to California content standards at each grade tested, will be administered this spring. The CAPA in science for grades five, eight, and ten also will become operational in 2008. Blueprints for the CAPA are on the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/capablueprints.asp>.

Standards-Based Tests in Spanish for English Learners Extended through Grade Seven

- Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS) for reading-language arts and mathematics will be administered as the STAR Program's designated primary language test (DPLT) in grades two through seven in 2008. Questions for the STS in Spanish are based on California content standards for the subjects tested. The STS replaces the *Aprenda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición (Aprenda 3)* as the DPLT in those six grades. The STS will replace the *Aprenda 3* as the DPLT in additional grades as new tests are developed. Blueprints for the STS are available at the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/stsblueprints.asp>.
- State law (*Education Code* Section 60640) requires all Spanish-speaking English learners to take the STS or the *Aprenda 3* in addition to the tests in the STAR Program that are administered in English if:
 - They receive instruction in Spanish (regardless of how long they have been in school in the United States), or

- They have been enrolled in a school in the United States for less than 12 months (cumulative).

At the option of the school district, schools also may test English learners who will have been in a United States school 12 months or more (cumulative) and who are not receiving instruction in Spanish.

Updated Resources

- Released CST questions from the 2007 administration are posted on the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>. Released questions are to be used in conjunction with the *Guidelines on Academic Preparation for State Assessments*. These guidelines are posted on the Student Testing Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>.
- Teacher guides for the 2007 California Writing Standards Tests in grades four and seven are posted on the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>. These guides include the prompts, sample student work, teacher commentaries, and scoring rubrics from the spring 2007 administration.

Questions and Answers About the 2008 STAR Program

What is the STAR Program?

The Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program is an important part of the state assessment system. Administered annually in the spring in grades two through eleven, the STAR Program was first authorized in 1997 and reauthorized until 2011 by state law (*Education Code Section 60640*). Tests in the STAR Program measure how well students in California public schools are learning the knowledge and skills identified in the California content standards. The STAR Program for 2008 includes six tests:

- The **California Standards Tests (CSTs)** measure the achievement of California content standards in English-language arts, mathematics, science, and history-social science (for grades two through eleven).
- The **California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition (CAT/6 Survey)** measure the achievement of general academic knowledge in core subjects. These norm-referenced tests provide national comparisons (for grades three and seven only).
- The **California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)** measures the achievement of California content standards in English-language arts, mathematics, and science. This alternate assessment is for students who have significant cognitive disabilities and cannot take the CSTs even with accommodations or modifications (for grades two through eleven).
- The **California Modified Assessment (CMA)** measures the achievement of California content standards in English-language arts, mathematics, and science. This assessment is for students with disabilities who meet CMA eligibility criteria approved by the State Board of Education (for grades three through five in 2008).
- The **Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS)** measure the achievement of California content standards in reading-language arts and mathematics in Spanish. This assessment is for Spanish-speaking English learners (for grades two through seven in 2008).

Who takes the tests in the STAR Program?

- The **Apreda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición (Apreda 3)** measures the achievement of general academic knowledge in Spanish. This norm-referenced test is for Spanish-speaking English learners (for grades eight through eleven in 2008).

All students in grades two through eleven participate in the STAR Program, including students with disabilities and students who are English learners. In addition to the tests administered in English, state law (*Education Code* Section 60640) requires all Spanish-speaking English learners to take the designated primary language test (DPLT) if:

- They receive instruction in Spanish (regardless of how long they have been in school in the United States), or
- They have been enrolled in a school in the United States for less than 12 months (cumulative).

At the option of the school district, schools also may test English learners who will have been in a United States school 12 months or more (cumulative) and who are not receiving instruction in Spanish. For spring 2008, the DPLT is the STS in grades two through seven and the *Apreda 3* in grades eight through eleven.

Only students whose parents or guardians have submitted written requests to exempt them from STAR Program testing do not take any of the STAR Program tests (*Education Code* Section 60615).

What is done to assist students with disabilities?

Some students with disabilities may require testing variations, accommodations, and/or modifications to be able to take the tests. These are listed in *Matrix 1. Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments (October 2007)*, which is available on the Student Testing Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>. A separate *Matrix for the California Modified Assessment Test Variations and Accommodations for the 2008 Administration* is available on the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/cmastar.asp>. The CMA does not allow for modifications because it is a modified test.

Test variations are allowed for any student who regularly uses them in the classroom. Accommodations and modifications must be specified in

each student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. The IEPs for students with significant cognitive disabilities, who are unable to take the CSTs even with modifications, specify that they are to take the CAPA.

The IEPs for students with disabilities, who have been unable to demonstrate grade-level proficiency* on the CSTs and other measures, may specify that the students take the CMA. Eligibility criteria, approved by the State Board of Education, are available on the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/cmastar.asp>. The IEPs for these students also are to identify the content area(s) to be tested with the CMA and which accommodations, if any, are to be used.

Will testing below a student's grade be allowed for the spring 2008 administration?

No. Testing below a student's grade is not allowed. All IEPs should be reviewed in every school district to ensure that any provision for testing below a student's grade has been removed. All students are required to take the test for the grade in which they are enrolled.

What is done to assist students who are English learners?

During testing, English learners may use English-to-primary language translation glossaries or word lists that are regularly used in the classroom and do not include definitions or formulas. This assistance may be provided for all subjects except English-language arts on the CSTs and CMAs and may not be provided in any subject on the CAT/6 Survey. English learners may have test directions translated for them and ask clarifying questions in their primary language for all subjects tested on the CSTs, the CMAs, and the CAT/6 Survey. English learners also may be tested separately if such a setting is part of the regular classroom instruction or assessments. The variations allowed for English learners are listed in *Matrix 2. Matrix of Test Variations for Administration of California Statewide Assessments for English Learners (October 2007)*, which is available on the Student Testing Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>.

When do parents or guardians get their student's results?

Student STAR Program results must be provided to parents or guardians within 20 working days after the school district has received them from the testing contractor. STAR Program reports usually are mailed by the school district to each student's home.

* Grade-level proficiency refers to the student's level of knowledge and degree of mastery of the California content standards for the subjects being assessed. This grade-level proficiency should not to be confused with the STAR Program performance levels as reported on the STAR Student Report.

Can results from the STAR Program be used to determine if a student should be retained?

A school district may use STAR Program results to help make decisions about student placement, promotion, retention, or other considerations related to student achievement. These test scores should never be used by themselves to make such important decisions. School districts also should consider local assessments, classroom tests, grades, and teacher recommendations in making these decisions.

Note: Parents or guardians should be reminded that the students' results are confidential and maintained only by the school district.

Can parents or guardians excuse their student from the tests in the STAR Program?

Yes. State law (*Education Code* Section 60615) allows a parent or guardian to excuse his or her student from the tests in the STAR Program. This request must be made in writing to the school. In addition, the request may specify:

- The test(s) from which the student is to be exempted (i.e., all or some tests).
- The length of time that the parent's or guardian's request remains in effect (i.e., current year or longer).

Can parents or guardians see the tests in the STAR Program?

No. By law (*Education Code* Section 60616) the tests in the STAR Program are secure tests and cannot be seen by anyone other than the parties specified by law (i.e., school board members, legislators). This stipulation helps maintain the integrity of the tests and ensures that the rights of all students are protected. Each year, 25 percent of the test questions used in the CSTs are released and posted on the Internet for public viewing. The released questions show the content and types of questions that are included in the CST portion of the STAR Program. These released questions are available on the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>.

Do STAR Program test results go on a student's high school transcript?

No. Student results for tests in the STAR Program do not go on the high school transcript unless a parent or guardian signs a release or submits a written request allowing the school or school district to do so. Students, parents, or guardians may authorize the release of individual student results to colleges or universities for the purpose of credit, placement, or admission (*Education Code* Section 60641).

How can schools help prepare students for the tests in the STAR Program?

The best way to prepare students for the tests in the STAR Program is to provide classroom instruction and assessments that are aligned to the California content standards. Teachers are encouraged to talk with their students' parents or guardians about what the school district, school, and teachers are doing to make sure the content standards are being taught and tested.

Additional Information

Additional information about the STAR Program is available on the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/>.

Questions and Answers About the California Standards Tests (CSTs)

(including CST in Writing)

Grades, Subjects, and Test Format

The California Standards Tests (CSTs) are an important component of the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. Developed exclusively for California's public schools, CSTs are designed to measure how well students are achieving state-adopted content standards in core subjects. Answers to commonly asked questions about the grades and subjects tested and the content and format of the CSTs are provided below. Basic information about the CSTs and other STAR Program tests can be found in the *Questions and Answers About the 2008 STAR Program*. California content standards addressed on the CSTs are available on the Content Standards Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/>.

What grades and subjects are tested on the CSTs?

Students take two, three, four, or five CSTs depending on their grade level or the courses they are taking. The CSTs are given for the following subject areas at each grade level:

- Grades two, three, four, six, and seven
 - English-language arts*
 - Mathematics

- Grade five
 - English-language arts
 - Mathematics
 - Science

- Grades eight, nine, and eleven
 - English-language arts
 - Mathematics
 - Science
 - History-social science (may or may not apply at grade nine)

* Students in grades four and seven also complete a writing task as part of the CST in English-language arts.

| | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Grade ten <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English-language arts • Mathematics • Science** • History-social science (may or may not apply at grade ten) |
| <p><i>What content is tested on the CSTs?</i></p> | <p>There are three kinds of CSTs that are based on California content standards. First, there are CSTs that are based on content standards for a specific grade and subject such as grade two mathematics and grade ten English-language arts. Second, there are CSTs administered in the secondary grades that are based on content standards for specific courses such as Chemistry, World History, and Geometry. These often are referred to as the end-of-course CSTs. Third, there are CSTs that cover selected content standards for a specific subject but for multiple-grades. Two examples are the Grade Five Science CST, which covers science content standards for grades four and five, and the Grade Eight History-Social Science CST, which covers history-social science content standards for grades six, seven, and eight.</p> |
| <p><i>What subjects have end-of-course CSTs?</i></p> | <p>Mathematics, science, and history-social science are the three subjects that have end-of-course CSTs.</p> |
| <p><i>What are the end-of-course CSTs in mathematics?</i></p> | <p>There are six end-of-course CSTs in mathematics. Students in grades seven through eleven take an end-of-course CST in mathematics according to the following guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The CST in Algebra I is for students in grades seven through eleven who are completing Algebra I. This CST is based on the content standards for Algebra I. ■ The CST in Geometry or the CST in Algebra II are for students in grades eight through eleven who are completing the respective mathematics course. These CSTs are based on the content standards for Geometry or Algebra II respectively. ■ The CSTs in Integrated Mathematics 1, Integrated Mathematics 2, or Integrated Mathematics 3 are for students in grades eight through eleven who are completing the respective Integrated Mathematics course. These CSTs are based on selected combinations of content standards for Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II. <hr/> <p>** Most grade ten students take two science CSTs.</p> |

In addition to the six end-of-course CSTs noted previously, there are two mathematics CSTs administered at the completion of specific courses:

- The General Mathematics CST is for students in grades eight and nine who are not enrolled in or completing a standards-based mathematics course designated for these grades. For example, grade eight students who are completing the first year of a two-year Algebra I course take the General Mathematics CST. The General Mathematics CST is based on content standards for grades six and seven.
- The Summative High School Mathematics CST is for the following two categories of students:
 - Students in grades nine and ten who completed Algebra II or Integrated Mathematics 3 during a previous school year or the first block for students on block schedule. These students will take the Summative High School Mathematics CST each year through grade eleven.
 - Students in grade eleven who completed Algebra II or Integrated Mathematics 3 any time prior to the beginning of STAR Program testing. This includes students in grade eleven who are taking higher mathematics courses or no mathematics courses.

What are the end-of-course CSTs in science?

There are a total of eight end-of-course CSTs in science. There are four end-of-course CSTs in science that are based on the content standards for Earth Sciences, Biology/Life Sciences, Chemistry, and Physics respectively. In addition, there are four end-of-course CSTs for integrated/coordinated science that are based on selected combinations of the content standards for Earth Sciences, Biology/Life Sciences, Chemistry, and Physics. Only students completing one of the standards-based science courses listed above take one of the appropriate CSTs in science.

What CSTs in science are required for grade ten students?

Grade ten students are required to take the Grade Ten California Life Science Standards Test. This test covers selected content standards for middle school life sciences and high school biology. In addition to this test, most grade ten students take an end-of-course CST in science for the course they completed during the summer session or are completing that school year.

What is the end-of-course CST in history-social science?

The end-of-course CST in history-social science is World History. This CST may be taken in grade nine, ten, or eleven.

What question formats are found on the CSTs?

Questions for all of the CSTs, except for the writing tasks in grades four and seven, are in a multiple-choice format. Students are presented with a question and asked to select the correct answer from four possible choices. Students in grades two and three mark their answer choices in the test booklet, and students in grades four through eleven mark an answer document. All multiple-choice questions are machine scored. Released CST questions from prior administrations are posted for public viewing on the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>.

For the CST in English-language arts, students in grades four and seven respond to multiple-choice questions and a writing task or prompt. The score on the written response is combined with the results of the multiple-choice questions to produce an overall score and the performance level for the CST in English-language arts. Writing guides for grades four and seven from prior administrations are posted for public viewing on the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>.

What standards are addressed by the writing tasks in grades four and seven?

The writing tasks in grades four and seven address the writing applications strand of the content standards in English-language arts.

In grade four, students are required to produce one of three types of writing: a narrative (story), a summary of a reading passage, or a response to literature. In grade seven, students are required to produce one of four types of writing: a fictional narrative (story), a persuasive letter or essay, a summary of a reading passage, or a response to literature.

Where can I see sample questions from the CSTs?

Sample questions from previous CSTs and writing tasks for grades four and seven are available on the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/>.

Additional Information

Additional information about the STAR Program and the CSTs is available on the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/>.

About the Early Assessment Program...

In addition to the STAR Program tests, students in grade eleven may participate in the Early Assessment Program (EAP). The EAP is a collaborative effort between the CDE, State Board of Education (SBE), and California State University (CSU). The purpose of this assessment program is to help identify a student's level of readiness for college level work in English and/or mathematics. Detailed information about the EAP is available on the CSU Web site at <http://www.calstate.edu/eap/> (Outside Source). The new EAP handbook, released by the CSU for school leaders, also is available as a CSU Web document at http://www.calstate.edu/eap/documents/eap_site_leader_handbook.pdf (Outside Source).

Questions and Answers About the California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey)

The California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey), published by CTB/McGraw-Hill, is a norm-referenced test series that is a component of California's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. The CAT/6 Survey series is only administered to students in grades three and seven, and measures general academic knowledge in reading, language arts, spelling, and mathematics.

The CAT/6 Survey series allows a comparison of California students to others across the nation. It provides a snapshot of the performance of California's students compared to the performance of students in a national sample. Its content reflects national standards, and its results contribute to indicators for state accountability.

Grades, Subjects, and Test Format

Who takes the CAT/6 Survey?

All students in grades three and seven who take the California Standards Tests (CSTs) or the California Modified Assessment (CMA) also take the CAT/6 Survey.

What grades and subjects are tested on the CAT/6 Survey?

The CAT/6 Survey is administered in grade three and seven only. General academic knowledge that is commonly taught in public schools throughout the United States is assessed in reading, language arts, spelling, and mathematics.

What question formats are found on the CAT/6 Survey?

Questions for the CAT/6 Survey are in a multiple-choice format. Students are presented with a question and asked to select the correct answer from four or five possible choices. Students mark their answer choices in the test booklet for grade three and on an answer document for grade seven. All multiple-choice questions are machine scored.

Students with Disabilities and English Learners

What is done to help students with disabilities who take the CAT/6 Survey?

Most students with disabilities take the CAT/6 Survey along with all other students in grades three and seven under standard conditions. Some students with disabilities may need special assistance when taking the CAT/6 Survey. This assistance may include testing

variations, accommodations, and/or modifications. These are listed in *Matrix 1. Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments (October 2007)*, which is available on the Student Testing Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>.

Test variations are allowed for any student who regularly uses them in the classroom. Accommodations and modifications must be specified in each student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. No testing below a student's grade is allowed.

What is done to help students who are English learners take the CAT/6 Survey?

The CAT/6 Survey is administered only in English. English learners may have test directions translated for them and may ask clarifying questions in their primary language for all subjects tested on the CAT/6 Survey, including language arts. English learners may be tested separately if such a setting is part of their regular classroom instruction or assessment. The variations allowed for English learners are listed in *Matrix 2. Matrix of Test Variations for Administration of California Statewide Assessments for English Learners (October 2007)*, which is available on the Student Testing Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>.

Scores Reported

What scores are reported for CAT/6 Survey?

The CAT/6 Survey scores for each subject tested are reported as percentile ranks. The 50th percentile rank is the national average, and a score between the 40th and 60th percentiles is considered an average score. For example, a student scoring at the 55th percentile means the student scored as well as, or better than, 55 percent of the students in a national sample. Reports for students with disabilities who use modifications when taking the CAT/6 Survey will note that the student was tested with modifications.

When do parents or guardians receive CAT/6 Survey results?

Parents or guardians of students in grades three and seven will receive CAT/6 Survey results as part of the STAR Student Report. Most parents or guardians will receive their STAR Student Report by the end of September each year.

For more information...

Additional information about the CAT/6 Survey may be found on the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp> or the CTB/McGraw-Hill Web site at <http://www.ctb.com> (Outside Source).

Questions and Answers About the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)

What is the CAPA?

The California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) is an alternate assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to take the California Standards Tests (CSTs) or the California Modified Assessment (CMA) even with accommodations (or modifications for the CSTs only). The CAPA was added to the STAR Program in 2003 to ensure that all California students could participate in statewide assessments.

Who are students with “significant cognitive disabilities”?

Generally, students with “significant cognitive disabilities” refer to a small number of students whose intellectual and adaptive capabilities are far below those of typical students at the same grade or age. Students with significant cognitive disabilities require intensive support and services that may be provided in a regular or special classroom.

Must all students take the CSTs, the CAPA, or the CMA?

Yes. All students enrolled in grades two through eleven are required to participate in the STAR Program by taking the CSTs, the CAPA, or the CMA. Students with significant cognitive disabilities who are in ungraded programs also take the CAPA.

What is an “ungraded” program?

Generally, “ungraded” programs for students with disabilities involve placing students of different ages in the same classroom without designated grades.

How do schools determine if a student takes the CAPA and what level of the CAPA he or she takes?

Each student’s individualized education program (IEP) team determines if a student will take the CAPA and what level of the CAPA he or she takes. That determination must be specified in the student’s IEP. The CAPA has five levels. Most students eligible for the CAPA take the level that corresponds to their grade placement.

To determine the grade for students in ungraded programs, subtract five from their chronological age on December 2, 2007. For example, a student who was eleven years old on December 2 would be given the grade six tests ($11 \text{ years} - 5 = \text{grade } 6 \text{ tests}$).

What are the five CAPA levels offered?

The five CAPA levels are as follows:

- Level I — grades two through eleven (the most significantly cognitively disabled students)
- Level II — grades two and three
- Level III — grades four and five
- Level IV — grades six through eight
- Level V — grades nine through eleven

What subjects are being assessed by the CAPA in 2008?

For the 2008 administration, students are being assessed in English-language arts and mathematics. Students taking the CAPA in grades five, eight, and ten also are assessed in science. The CAPA is linked to California content standards that are appropriate for students taking the CAPA.

Who administers the CAPA?

A certificated or licensed member of the school staff who has been trained in CAPA testing procedures administers the CAPA.

How are CAPA questions asked?

The CAPA is administered individually. The examiner asks the student to perform a task, observes the performance, and scores and records the performance according to a specific scoring rubric (guide).

How are the CAPA results reported?

The reporting process for the CAPA is much like the process used for other tests within the STAR Program. School districts receive STAR student reports (CAPA version) for distribution to parents and guardians and school and school district reports for use by school district and school staffs. In addition to the individual reports, group CAPA results for schools, school districts, counties, and the state are posted annually on the STAR Results Web site at <http://star.cde.ca.gov>.

Note: Parents and guardians should be reminded that students' results are confidential and are maintained only by the school district.

What results will be reported for the 2008 CAPA?

CAPA reports for the 2008 administration will show how well students performed according to California content standards in English-language arts, mathematics, and science. Results will show the student's CAPA scale score and performance levels for English-language arts and mathematics. Because science results are being reported for the first

***Are there changes in the
CAPA for 2008?***

time, only the percent correct score will be reported until standard setting is conducted in spring 2009. Performance levels will be established at that time. The State Board of Education (SBE) established five performance levels for reporting CAPA results: advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic.

Yes. The CAPA has been revised with questions that are linked more closely to content standards for the grade being tested. Blueprints for the revised CAPA are on the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/capablueprints.asp>.

***How are CAPA results
used?*****Using CAPA Results**

CAPA results are used in many important ways. The IEP team—including teachers, administrators, parents and guardians, and support staff—uses CAPA results to help monitor each student's academic progress. These results also are used to determine if students should take the CAPA, the CMA, or the CSTs in subsequent years. Individual student results are combined to prepare reports by grade and subject for each school, school district, county, and the state. These results are used with other information about student achievement to help make decisions about ways to improve student learning and school programs. The CAPA scores are also used, with results of other state tests, to meet state and federal accountability requirements.

Additional Information

Additional information about the STAR Program and the CAPA is available from the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/index.asp>.

Questions and Answers About the California Modified Assessment (CMA)

Who is eligible to take the CMA?

The California Modified Assessment (CMA) is part of the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. This test is a modified assessment for students with disabilities who have an individualized education program (IEP) and meet the eligibility criteria. Answers to commonly asked questions about the participation criteria, the grades and subjects tested, and the content and format of the CMA are provided below.

Participation Criteria

The CMA is taken by students with an IEP who meet the following criteria as specified in their IEP:

- **Previous Participation** – The student took the California Standards Test (CST) and scored below basic or far below basic in the subject tested, and may have taken the CST with a modification, or

The student scored proficient or advanced on the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) Level II-V in two previous years.
- **Objective Multiple Measures** – Objective evidence of academic progress (or lack of progress), based on multiple measurements over a period of time, indicates that the student will not achieve grade-level standards as measured by a proficient performance level on the CST even with accommodations.
- **Response to Instruction** – Academic progress in response to grade-level instruction, including special education and related services designed to meet individual needs and classroom support for subjects assessed by the CMA, is such that the student will not likely achieve grade-level proficiency, even with instructional intervention.
- **High School Diploma** – Students, who take alternate assessments based on modified academic achievement standards, are

How do schools and school districts decide if a student takes the CMA?

not prevented from completing the requirements for a high school diploma. All students must meet the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) requirements in order to receive a diploma from a California public high school.

- **Informed Parents or Guardians** – Parents or guardians of students selected for participation in the CMA are informed that their student’s achievement will be measured based on modified achievement standards.

Must all students take the STAR Program tests?

Each student’s IEP team decides if a student is eligible, and the student’s IEP must specify the CMA for STAR Program participation. The eligible student’s IEP also is to identify the content area(s) to be tested and accommodations, if any, to be used. The criteria for CMA participation are posted on the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/cmastar.asp>.

Yes. All students must take the STAR Program tests (CSTs, CAPA, or CMA), unless parents or guardians submit a written request to exempt their student (*Education Code* Section 60615). It is very important that all students take part in the STAR Program; each school district and school must have at least 95 percent of its students participate in statewide tests in order to meet federal accountability requirements.

Can students with no record of STAR Program testing take the CMA?

No. The CMA participation criteria require having results of a previous year’s CST or CAPA results. Students with no record of STAR Program testing in a previous year may not take the CMA. This is the reason why the CMA is not being developed for grade two.

Students take the CST in science for the first time in grade five. How do they qualify for the CMA in science in grade five?

Because the science assessments are not given prior to grade five, a student may meet the first part of the participation criteria for the CMA in science if he or she has taken the CST in English-language arts or mathematics in a previous year and scored below basic or far below on either test. The student may have taken the CST with accommodations and/or modifications. In addition, the student has received special education and related services to support access to and progress in the general curriculum in which the student is enrolled.

Clarification for participation in the CMA in science is posted on the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/cmastar.asp>.

Are there testing variations and accommodations for the CMA?

Additional testing variations and accommodations may be provided to students as specified in *Matrix of the California Modified Assessment Test Variations and Accommodations for the 2008 Administration*. This matrix is posted on the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/cmastar.asp>. Modifications are not allowed. The CMA is a modified test.

What grades and subjects does the CMA assess in 2008?

Grades, Subjects, and Test Format

In spring 2008, eligible students in grades three through five may be assessed in English-language arts and/or mathematics. Students taking the CMA in grade five also may be assessed in science.

What types of questions are found on the CMA?

Questions on the CMA are in a multiple-choice format. Students are presented with a question and asked to select the correct answer from three possible response options. The CMA questions are presented differently from other STAR Program tests in that the type is larger and clearer, reading passages are shorter, and more graphics are included. Students in grade three mark their answers in the test booklet, and students in grades four and five mark an answer document.

Where can I see examples of CMA questions and how they differ from California Standards Test (CST) questions?

Examples of the format changes between the CST and the CMA are available on the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/cmastar.asp>.

Additional Information

Basic information about the CMA and other STAR Program tests also can be found in the *Questions and Answers About the 2008 STAR Program* on pages 9 through 13. Additional information about the STAR Program and the CMA is available on the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/>.

Questions and Answers About the Designated Primary Language Test

Standards-Based Tests in Spanish (STS)

Aprenda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición (Aprenda 3)

Are all English learners required to participate in the STAR Program?

Yes. Under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 and state law, all students, including English learners, are required to participate in the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. All English learners, regardless of their primary language, are required to take the STAR Program tests administered in English. This includes the California Standards Tests (CSTs) and, in grades three and seven only, the California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey). State law (*Education Code* Section 60640) requires that all Spanish-speaking English learners take the designated primary language test (DPLT) in addition to the tests in the STAR Program that are administered in English if:

- They receive instruction in Spanish (regardless of how long they have been in school in the United States), or
- They have been enrolled in a school in the United States for less than 12 months (cumulative).

At the option of the school district, schools also may test English learners who will have been in a United States school 12 months or more (cumulative) and who are not receiving instruction in Spanish. The STAR Program does not include DPLTs for English learners who speak primary languages other than Spanish.

What is done to assist English learners on the STAR Program tests administered in English?

English learners may use English-to-primary language translation glossaries or word lists that are regularly used in the classroom and do not include definitions or formulas. This assistance may be provided for all subjects except English-language arts on the CSTs and may not be provided in any subject tested on the CAT/6 Survey. They also may have test directions translated for them and ask clarifying questions in their primary language for all subjects tested on the CSTs and CAT/6 Survey. Students who are English learners may be tested separately if such a setting is part of the regular classroom instruction or assessments. The variations allowed for English learners are listed in the *Matrix 2. Matrix*

What is the designated primary language test?

of Test Variations for Administration of California Statewide Assessment (October 2007), which is available on the Student Testing Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>.

The DPLT is part of the STAR Program. In spring 2008, the Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS) are the DPLT to be administered to eligible English learners in grades two through seven. In grades eight through eleven, the DPLT to be administered to eligible English learners is the Aprenda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición (Aprenda 3).

Why are two different tests administered as the DPLT?

Currently, the DPLT involves two different tests because the CDE is completing the development of the STS and transitioning from the Aprenda 3. This transition began in spring 2007 with grades two, three, and four. The STS are scheduled to replace the Aprenda 3 as the DPLT in all grades tested by spring 2009.

The STS are standards-based tests developed exclusively for California public schools. These tests are based on California content standards in reading-language arts and mathematics. Unlike the STS, the Aprenda 3 is a published norm-referenced achievement test of general academic knowledge in Spanish that is not based explicitly on California content standards. The STS, therefore, will allow Spanish-speaking English learners to demonstrate achievement of the California content standards.

When are the STS and Aprenda 3 to be given in spring 2008?

School districts are required to give the STS during the same 21-day window established for the CSTs and the CAT/6 Survey (grades three and seven only). Within this window, the STS may be administered before or after the CSTs. School districts are required to schedule the administration of the Aprenda 3 between March 15 and May 14, 2008. Most school districts give the Aprenda 3 prior to the administration of other STAR Program tests.

How much time are students given to take the STS or the Aprenda 3?

The STS and Aprenda 3 are not timed tests. School districts are provided with recommended times for students to complete each test, which vary by grade and subject. Students who are actively working on a test at the end of the recommended time must be allowed more time to complete the test.

Can parents or guardians see the STS or Aprenda 3?

No. State law (*Education Code* Section 60616) states that all of the tests in the STAR Program, which includes the STS and Aprenda 3, are to remain secure. This means that the tests cannot be seen by anyone other than the students who take the tests and the parties specified by law such as school board members and legislators.

What is done to assist English learners with disabilities?

Most English learners with disabilities take the CSTs, CMAs, STS, or Aprenda 3 along with other students under standard conditions. Some English learners with disabilities may require testing variations, accommodations, and/or modifications to be able to take the CSTs, STS, or Aprenda 3. These are listed in *Matrix 1. Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California State-wide Assessments (October 2007)*, which is available on the Student Testing Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>. There also is a separate *Matrix for the California Modified Assessment Test Variations and Accommodations for the 2008 Administration* found on the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/cmastar.asp>.

Test variations are allowed for any student who regularly uses them in the classroom. Accommodations and modifications must be specified in each student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. The CMA does not allow for modifications because it is a modified test.

What question formats are found on the STS and Aprenda 3?

Questions for all of the STS and Aprenda 3 tests are in a multiple-choice format. Students are presented with a question and asked to select the correct answer from four possible choices on the STS or from four or five possible choices on the Aprenda 3. Students in grades two and three mark their answer choices in the test booklet. Students in other grades mark their answer choices on a separate answer document. All multiple-choice questions are machine scored.

When do parents or guardians receive their student's STS or Aprenda 3 student reports?

As required for all tests in the STAR Program, student reports for the STS or Aprenda 3 must be distributed to parents or guardians within 20 working days after the school district has received them. Individual STS and Aprenda 3 reports should arrive in all school districts by the end of September. The reports for these two tests will be provided in Spanish.

Note: Parents or guardians should be reminded that the students' results are confidential and maintained only by the school district.

What information will be included on the STS or Aprenda 3 student report?

The STS student report will provide results that describe how well students achieved identified California content standards for reading-language arts and mathematics. The STS report for 2008 will provide percent correct scores for each subject. Standard setting is anticipated for fall 2008 for grades two through seven. The standard setting will allow future STAR student reports for the STS to provide proficiency level information. The Aprenda 3 student report will include score information for each subject area of the test (i.e., reading, mathematics, language, and spelling).

How are STS or Aprenda 3 results used to help students achieve in school?

The results in the STS or Aprenda 3 student report provide information that may be used with other achievement data, including the results on the CSTs or CMA, to identify Spanish-speaking English learners' academic strengths and areas that need improvement. Parents or guardians should review areas of concern with their student's teachers to discuss specific help needed to improve learning.

The STS or Aprenda 3 student report is one source of information about the progress Spanish-speaking English learners are making in school. Parents, guardians, and teachers also should review grades, classroom work, and the results from other classroom and standardized tests for a more complete picture of each student's academic progress.

Additional Information

Additional information about the STS, Aprenda 3, or other tests in the STAR Program is available on the STAR Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/>.

Resources Available on the Internet

Academic Performance Index (API)

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ap/index.asp>

Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP)

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ay/index.asp>

California Standards Tests (CSTs)

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/>

CST Blueprints

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>

CST in Writing

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>

CAPA Blueprints

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/capablueprints.asp>

CMA Blueprints

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/cmablueprints.asp>

Content Standards

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/>

Matrix 1. Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments (October 2007) (for all statewide assessments except for the CMA)

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>

Matrix 2. Matrix of Test Variations for Administration of California Statewide Assessments for English Learners (October 2007) (for all statewide assessments except for the CMA)

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>

Matrix of the California Modified Assessment Test Variations and Accommodations for the 2008 Administration

<http://www.cde.gov/ta/tg/sr/cmastar.asp>

CST Released Test Questions (2003–2007)

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>

Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/>

2008 STAR Program Internet Summary Reports

<http://star.cde.ca.gov>

2008 STAR Program Summary Results Research Files

<http://star.cde.ca.gov>

DataQuest Parents Reference Page

<http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/DQP.htm>

Early Assessment Program

<http://www.calstate.edu/eap/> (Outside Source)